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THE FARMER AND REFORM

The Man Who Tills the Soil Fails to Find the "More Abundant Life" Because He Has Not Been Accustomed to Team Work.

Exclusive Service The Survey Press

(Mr. Conn is one of the pioneers in the "get together" movement that has recently been instituted among farm-Years before the President's Country Life Commission was thought of he started a "Federation of Rural Forces" in McHenry County, Illinois. He writes from large personal experi-

It occurs to the writer that of an the causes that prevent the farmer from entering completely into the inheritance of the race and the joys of the "more abundant life," that most the "more abundant life," that most the lack of a proper the "more abundant life," that most fundamental is the lack of a proper social consciousness. His regard for others, to a great degree, is limited to those directly dependent upon him. He builds, thinks and loves almost entirely for his own family. The halfmile from anyone has somewhat narrowly inclined his social nature. He does not work in team fashion to good loes not work in team fashion to good effect. He is not entirely unprogressive. In truth this is too frequently sive. In truth this is too frequently ascribed to the farmer without proper qualification. He may be justly described as unprogressive when it comes to matters of co-operation or social activity. He often has his "modern" improvements on his farm, but they are solely for him and his "son John." The same man when he moves to town to "retire" may quite possibly be found among the reactionpossibly be found among the reaction-aries or members of the "agin it" party when it comes to the questions

party when it comes to the questions of municipal improvements. He has not been "broke" to team work. He has always gone "sirgle."

The most vital problems of the farmer of today involve the economic elemen: In their solutions and the solution in turn reacts upon the economic situation. The reorganization of two of the most important institutions of the country, the school and church, demanls a riper social consciousness. We must have more taxes for one and more generous subscriptions and enlowments for the other. The consolidated country school on

health. He has ignored if not actually defied the work of his local agricultural experiment station to the "last ditch," and only in the last few years has he begun somewhat grudgingly to give them his assistance and confidence.

avail himself of the mechanical con-veniences of the times. He has most frequently been the pioneer in subfrequently been the pioneer in sub-scribing for marvelous "hair-grow-ers." quack remedles, magnified fruit embalmed in alcohol and many other "gold bricks." He has too often re-fused to assist and credit the hon-est expert in a worthy, constructive work, but has been easily hypnotized by the fake who always held out promises of immediate and magnifi-cent results. Not the least among cent results. Not the least among these instances of his refusal to recog-nize his real friends was the attitude nize his real friends was the attitude displayed by many farmers toward the proposal to appoint a Commission on Country Life. It was ridiculed privately and publicly and here and there are still to be found the dispensers of sarcasm among the farmers. It is the old story of disregard for the opinion of the one who ought to know more than the average person about the situation. That the Commission should be made up entirely of a number of 80-called practical farmabout the situation. That the Commission should be made up entirely of a number of so-called practical farmers is not to be thought of. The sooner that farmers recognize the fact that suggestions and much help must come from people who are making a greetial study of the problem and who come from people who are making a from special study of the problem and who June. special study of the problem and who are not now milking cows twice a day, the sooner we shall see a better day. The fact that a specialist is not now working on a farm is not prima facie evidence that all his suggestions are valueless and wholly theoretical. The best advice to many professions and occupations often comes from people who have obtained a good vantage point and proper perspective. The highest self-respect can only come to those who have a high respect for others and their knowledge in an age whose complexity is as eviin an age whose complexity is as evi-

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Bartholomay's Rochester Lager, Sode in an age whose compexity is as evident as the present.

The farmer's lack of regard for the finer conventionalities of life weakens his attempts at co-operation. The men of the city appreciate these so-called minor traits. This very regard for the niceties in social relations dignifies and strengthens their co-operative efforts.

The writer recently attended a meeting of about six hundred farmers who were attempting to form an association for mutual protection. The soen was enough to make one weep who has at heart the welfare of country life. United and harmonious action was an impossibility. The chairman, a good man a farmer, could do little toward maintaining order. Parliamentary practices were wholly ignored and trampled under foot as were many other conventionalities. The agent for the finer conventionalities of life weakens his attempts at co-operation. The men of the city appreciate these so-called minor traits. This very regard for the niceties in social relations dignifies and strengthens their co-operative efforts.

The writer recently attended a meeting of about six hundred farmers who were attempting to form an associal to make one weep who has at heart the welfare of country life. United and harmonious action was an impossibility. The chairman, a good man a farmer, could do little toward maintaining o many other conventionalities. The appearance of the room after the adjournment (better dissolution) was a spectacle calculated to bring a blush to the cheek of the man of some refinement and regard for manners.

The writer is loath to say these seemingly harsh things about the farmer and his lack of refinement in some very common and necessary walks of life. Yet it appeared to the observer to be a factor of no little consequence in the working out of an organization that would be effective and demand the respect of all people. When he comes to that point of development where he rationally and promptly recognizes a place and time for the finer conventionalities of life, he will have made a distinct advance toward his own freedom.

The groove of tradition and custom is worn deep by the farmer. Propos-

als for a change meet with the stock argument "we've always got along this way." In a sense it is a hard argument to meet. It's the last resort in forensic gratoricals. The farmer does many, many things in a long and laborious fashion that could easily be improved by slight changes and lacorious fashion that could easily be improved by slight changes here and there and by the aid of science. Brains could frequently substitute for brawn for the good of all were it not for this attitude of almost fetich worship. He often prides him-self on his "practicality" when a little

analysis displays his practicality as a slavish dependence on tradition or custom. Conservatism of the true type is the safe guard of the country but when it assumes the form of ances-tral worship and slavish repetition, when it becomes an accompanist of irrationality, it loses its claim to be-

ing a virtue.

This lack of respect for science and the rational element in farm activities has no doubt been one of the factors that drove the boy from the farm. This influence of tradition accounts for many instances of a sustained farm many instances of a sustained farm architecture that is out-worn, unadap-ted and unscientific. People still plant beans in "the moon" look the important truths that later science has revealed to them concern-ing the importance of obeying some of the mandates of nature in ing the soil and pay a little less at-tention to a fickle moon. But if the tention to a fickle moon. But if the moon does have something to say regarding the growth of beans, let us know. This is what adds zest to farming and puts it in line with other vocations. There is no country problem for the farmer who has caught the vision. It is for those who haven't seen the star of hope.

A man does not processarily become

two of the most important institutions of the country, the school and church, demands a riper social consciousness. We must have more taxes for one and more generous subscriptions and endowments for the other. The consolidated country school on one hand and the revitalized and reorganized church on the other will be potent factors in the development of this much negled social consciousness. To get it we must have them and to have them we must get it. All cooperation for mutual protection and profit demands a lively social consciousness for its inteption and for its successful and efficient prosecution. This seems to be the ultimate desideratum to insure progress in this day and age and this is just the point that seems to be vulnerable in the character of the farmer.

Growing out of this weakness are many secondary or resulting deficintions. that seems to be vulnerable in the character of the farmer.

Growing out of this weakness are many secondary or resulting deficincies in character. First, his lack of respect for, or a better appreciation of, the finer conventionalities of life. Those customs or practices that, considered separately are somewhat unimportant, but, in their totality, constitute a fairly true measure of civilization. Second, his lack of respect for "expert knowledge or opinion." Third, his somewhat b'ind worship of customs and traditions that lead him to confuse slavish imitation with the genuinely practical. Fourth, his inability to get a proper perspective because of his isolation, his so-called "independence" and the exaltation of the commercial ideal.

The farmer's lack of respect for expert opinion is one of the chief obtated that must be overcome before he can take a forward step. He has been one of the last to recognize the respective of the control of the last to recognize the respective of the control of the last to recognize the respective of the control of the last to recognize the respective of the form and leafly the function of the furner blind to the truth that

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